

MEDIA RELEASE

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Landmark deal to create world-class workforce



TAFE Queensland CEO Jodi Schmidt and Echo Entertainment Group CEO Matt Bekier.

Queensland's next generation of chefs and hospitality workers will soon be six-star trained following the signing of a landmark agreement today.

TAFE Queensland and Echo Entertainment Group today finalised their partnership to create the new Queensland Hotel and Hospitality School.

With delivery at TAFE Queensland's South Bank and Gold Coast campuses and partner hotel premises, the school will deliver tailored programs and qualifications to meet developing industry requirements and international standard.

TAFE Queensland CEO Jodi Schmidt said the partnership will provide real-world experience and better prepare students for a career in hospitality.

"This is about jobs for Queenslanders and taking our training in this important industry up a notch to compete with the best in the world," said Ms Schmidt.

"This is a very important sector to Queensland's economy. The tourism industry generates 241,000 jobs and delivers \$23 billion in Gross State Product for the state."

Ms Schmidt said the Queensland Hotel and Hospitality School will ensure students are ready to work in five and six star hotels and the region's finest restaurants, lifting the quality of the entire industry in South East Queensland and, importantly, raise the bar of service culture ahead of the 2018 Commonwealth.

Echo Entertainment Group CEO Matt Bekier said the initiative will develop the talent and capability of a highly skilled workforce that will provide exceptional standards of service, hospitality and cutting edge product and service innovation to the hospitality and tourism industry.

"We're proud to support these new offerings which will further encourage students to pursue tailored education and training to underpin a profession in the tourism industry," Mr Bekier said.

"Queensland has world-class beaches, a world-class reef and world-class scenery. We need to ensure our people in the hospitality industry are world-class as well.

"It's management's responsibility to ensure staff have the training and development they need. We want the best trained staff in the best run facilities that are as good as any in the world."

The announcement builds on the existing relationship between Echo Entertainment Group and TAFE Queensland, which already supports the next generation of chefs through the Echo Culinary Institute, creating opportunities for training and mentoring through the Apprentice Chef program.

Today's announcement was welcomed by industry employers including Hilton Brisbane, Palazzo Versace, Hotel Jen and RNA Convention Centre Brisbane.

Under the initiative, industry partners will train future generations of highly skilled tourism and hospitality employees to provide exceptional standards of service.

The first training agreement, signed today by TAFE Queensland CEO Jodi Schmidt and Echo Entertainment Group CEO Matt Bekier, sees the new school providing three new opportunities:

- **6 Star International Hospitality Service Programs (15 students each, with a program on the Gold Coast and in Brisbane starting 24 August 2015):** a bespoke program to deliver industry-ready frontline graduates with the service skills required for luxury 6 star properties. The program will be delivered as an intensive three month program, both on campus and on site with leading hospitality partners, and will incorporate an accredited Certificate III in Hospitality
- **Culinary Arts Apprenticeships (15 students starting September 2015):** This apprenticeship model will deliver a high level commercial cookery apprenticeship up to a certificate IV level, to help deliver future culinary stars to provide the finest in contemporary cuisine to the highest of international standards
- **Front of House Apprenticeships (4 apprentices starting July 2015):** Echo Entertainment is supporting this industry-led initiative designed to create exemplary food and beverage specialists with a recognised trade qualification for this profession within the hospitality industry

Should the Destination Brisbane Consortium, of which Echo Entertainment is a partner, be successful in its bid for Queen's Wharf Brisbane, the opportunities will increase significantly.

"Destination Brisbane Consortium's bid for Queen's Wharf includes five high-end hotels including one six-star hotel, 50 food and beverage outlets and other entertainment facilities. This would

provide tourism and hospitality trainees with first-hand, industry-leading experience at these facilities through trainee and apprenticeship programs,” Mr Bekier said.

“The Destination Brisbane Consortium is committed to delivering a world-class development in the city and to do that, we need world-class chefs, world-class hotel staff and world-class hospitality staff.”

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About TAFE Queensland - Queensland’s largest further education and training provider

- TAFE Queensland delivers successful outcomes for industry clients across the state. We are active from Thursday Island to the Gold Coast, from Bundaberg to Roma, and across the south-east corner.
- As Queensland’s largest and most experienced provider of further education and training, TAFE Queensland provides practical, industry-relevant training to more than 165,000 students across more than 500 program areas each year.
- TAFE Queensland delivers certificate to degree-level courses as well as customised training in health and community services, energy and resources, business, tourism and hospitality, building and construction, creative industries, information technology and more.
- We partner with our clients to design tailored end-to-end training packages that will boost their workforce capability and productivity. With multiple hubs around the state, we can call on any part of our business to train people across a project's full scope, or to provide specialist support for a particular aspect or role in a project's lifecycle or structure.

About Echo Entertainment Group in Queensland and its community partnerships

- Echo Entertainment, which operates Treasury Casino & Hotel in Brisbane and Jupiters Hotel & Casino on the Gold Coast, is one of Queensland’s largest private sector employees, with a workforce of more than 3,500.
- The company is proud to support a range of community groups, charities and sponsorships including Surf Life Saving Queensland (supported since 1994), Cancer Council Queensland and Ronald McDonald House South East Queensland.
- More than \$100 million has been contributed to the Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund (now the Gambling Community Benefit Fund) since 1987 for grants to community groups across Southern Queensland.
- In 2015, Jupiters and Treasury announced a three-year deal with the Queensland Rugby League to become an official partner of the QRL, and the home of the XXXX Queensland Maroons.